

a great deal of information bearing upon the matters under investigation, I have not deemed it expedient to mention names in this report; indeed I found it necessary in several instances to give an assurance that no names would be made public, in order to obtain information.

To avoid danger of misapprehension it may be as well to state here that I have not attempted to define the meaning of the term "Sweating system." Even among those who have made a special study of questions affecting labour and the labouring classes, there are widely varying opinions as to the meaning of the much used term, the differing definitions being almost as numerous as the men who give them. It has been defined as "the system of making clothing under filthy and inhuman conditions"; as "work sent out by a first contractor to be done in tenement houses or in the homes of the operatives"; as "a combination of the tenement house system, the sub-contract system and the task system"; as "wherever men are employed at low wages and under unhealthy conditions"; as "grinding the faces of the poor," etc., etc. As a matter of fact there is not in any country, certainly not in Canada, any system coextensive with the popular use of the term "sweating system." The words have really no definite meaning, for there are no conditions found in all the cases in which the term is applied, which are not also to be found in numerous other cases to which it is not applied. The confusion arising from the differing meanings which each witness attached to the term, appears to have been, in no small degree, responsible for the apparently rambling nature of the answers given to the upwards of thirty-two thousand questions, put by the Commission of the British House of Lords, to the witnesses who appeared before it. Realizing that any attempt on my part to act upon an arbitrary definition of the term "sweating system" would only hinder the inquiry, I have avoided this and conducted the investigation on more general grounds. For this reason whenever in this report the words are used they are not to be understood as having a definite meaning.

In Great Britain there are a considerable number of trades in which the "sweating system" obtains. Besides the clothing trade, the distress in which was the immediate occasion of the appointment of the Lords' Commission, the chain and nail trade, the nut and bolt trade, the boot trade and the cabinet making industry are all in a greater or lesser degree organized on the contract and sub-contract plan. In the United States the system is not so widely distributed and is confined to the various branches of the clothing trade, the making up of fur and feather goods and the manufacture of cigars and cigarettes. The excise laws of the Dominion effectually prevent the introduction of the "sweating system" into the cigar industry in Canada, but the conditions obtaining in the clothing and fur trades and in making of shirts, neckties and some other goods are so similar here and in the republic that it would be natural to expect that like methods of manufacture would prevail. I have considered it advisable, therefore, having regard to the limited time at my disposal, and believing that I would thus be making my inquiries in the quarter in which information would be most likely to be obtainable, to confine my investigation to the industries mentioned.

I directed my efforts to obtaining information under the following heads:—

1. Do the several manufacturing concerns manufacture their goods in factories of their own; give them out to contractors who have shops and employ workmen; or do they give them out directly to people who make them up in their own homes?
2. In those establishments in which more than one of these systems prevail, under which of them is the greater part of the work done?
3. Do manufacturers get their work done more cheaply or better by giving it out to contractors than they do when they have factories of their own?
4. When the work is given out either to contractors or to people who work at home, is there usually an agreement as to the prices to be paid—e.g., an agreement covering a period of time—or is the price fixed at the time the goods are given out; and, if the latter, is the fixing of the price deputed to some foreman or employee?
5. Have manufacturers any agreement or understanding with each other as to the prices they will pay for the making of goods they give out to contractors, or as to the wages they will pay in their factories?